

CLASSIFICATION SECRET

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

COUNTRY

USSR

DATE DISTR 26 Feb 1953

SUBJECT

Caspian Sea Shipping Capable of Being
Converted into Naval Units in Case of
War

NO. OF PAGES 2

PLACE
ACQUIREDNO. OF ENCLS.
(LISTED BELOW)DATE
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DATE OF INFORMATION

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THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION

1. The following vessels presently in operation or on the ways in the Caspian Sea area are capable of being converted into Naval units in case of war: Those of the Shipping Company "Reydtanker" in Astrakhan which include the "Lastachka" motor tugboat series, M/S "Pamiat' Tevarisch Volkova", M/S "Dzhambul" (Former Dzerzhinskii), M/S "Procfintern", M/S "Kuzmishov", M/S "Uritskii", and the M/S "X Godovshina Oztvabrya"

The motor ships were constructed in the period 1934-1936 by the imeni Zhdanov Sovmorskii yards. The main engines are non-compression, four-stage MAN-type Diesels, two to a ship. The Diesels are six-cylinder 450 hp each. (The total is 900 hp for the power plant on each ship.) The ships are capable of 8-10 knots unladen. These ships participated in combat operations at Stalingrad in 1942-1943 and demonstrated good fighting qualities. Their superstructure is entirely of steel with the exception of the pilot house. The spardecks are equipped with two foundations for mounting anti-aircraft machine guns or 37 mm cannon. The foundations are placed on the forward starboard and port sections of the spar-deck. The ships are in a good state of repair.

The regular area of activity of these ships is the northern part of the Caspian Sea: Astrakhan-14 Foot Roadstead - Gurev. They go occasionally to Baku and Krasnovodsk. The ships have the territory of Zayachii Island (Right bank of the Volga) as their base of operation.

2. Tugboat motorships of the Riga Ship Construction and Repair Yards such as: M/S "Gvardeyets" and M/S "Partisan" are also capable of conversion.

The main engines in each ship develop 500 hp, and have a speed of 9-10 knots unladen. The ships have one screw, and were constructed in 1946-47. These ships have all-steel superstructure with the exception of wooden pilot houses. At present these ships have no special installations for mounting cannon or machine guns, but they can be used as combat units without major preliminary work. The ships operate regularly between Astrakhan and Makhačkala, but also go occasionally to Baku. They are based in the Zayachii Island region on the right bank of the Volga.

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3. The motor tugboat "Bogatyr" which was acquired as reparations from Germany is another potential war vessel. It has two main engines of 550 hp each. It does eight knots (beginning with the 1952 season it is supposed to do 12 knots.) The hull and superstructure are steel with the exception of the pilot house. The "Bogatyr" is an ice-breaker (having a powerful ice-cutting strake), and a powerful electric crane. It can be used as a salvage ship and as a combat ship without major changes. This ship operates in the northern part of the Caspian Sea from Astrakhan to the 14-Foot Roadstead. It is based in the Zayachii Island region on the right bank of the Volga.

4. The Caspian Dry-cargo Shipping Company "Kaspiot" has a number of ships capable of being converted into naval units in case of war. For example: The series "B" Motor tugboats built by the Baku Yards imeni Vano Sturua,

"M/S Burny"	M/S "Bogatyrshny"
M/S "Bedovy"	M/S "Boikii"
M/S "Bystry"	M/S "Borovoi"
M/S "Editeiny"	M/S "Bogatyrshny"

These ships were built in 1947-1948. They have one screw and their main engine develops 500 hp with a speed of 12-13 knots unladen. The hull and superstructure are entirely of steel. There are foundations for 45 mm cannon installed on the forecastles, and the spardecks have foundations for antiaircraft machine guns. In case of need, the wooden coverings on the decks can be quickly removed. The ships operate between Baku, Astrakhan, and Krasnovodsk. They are based in the area of Pier 26 in Baku. In 1951 two series "B" tugboats appeared on the balance sheet of the Port of Baku and were used for work within the port. They were based in the area of pier 26 in Baku.

5. Apart from the 500 hp motor tugboats of the "Burny" series, in 1948 in the imeni Vano Sturua yards construction was started on motor tugs of the same type, differing only in being more powerful and having two screws. The main engines of each of these boats develop 800 hp and it is intended to make five of them, N15 to N22. (M/S "Tadzhik" M/S "Kazakh", M/S "Uzbek", etc.) Two of them are destined for the shipping company "Reydtanker" in Astrakhan. The remaining are for the shipping company "Kaspiot" in Baku. In 1951 the construction plan for 800 hp tugs was not fulfilled. These ships are supposed to go into the active fleet in 1952.

6. The 800 hp motor tugboats as well as the series "B" tugs can be used as combat units. The Vano Sturua yards in 1950 also began construction on twin-screw motor tugboats with main engines capable of 1200 hp in each of the boats. The construction of 10 units, from #23 through #32, is being planned. Tugs no 23 and 24 have been allotted to the "Reydtanker" shipping company in Astrakhan and the remaining ones have been assigned to the shipping companies "Kasptanker" and "Kaspiot" in Baku. In 1950 not a single unit in this series was delivered. The first ships, N23 and N24 were expected at the end of the 1952 season. These ships can also be used as combat units without additional re-equipping. All these new ships have (on the bridge) a sealed maximum speed. The seal cannot be broken without a special directive. At the present time, top speed for these ships is 12-14 knots, but if the seal is taken off they will be able to do 14-17 knots. The captains and senior engineers of such ships have been warned that the willful removal of these seals will make them liable to prosecution.

7. Crews of all the above-listed ships comprise 24-32 men at the present time. Living quarters for the crew have been fitted out in the hold. The superstructure contains only the captain's quarters, those of the senior engineers and radio men as well as operational quarters.

8. Volga-Caspian and Ural-Caspian trusts "Chief Directorate for the Caspian Fishing Industry" ("Glavkasybprosh") under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Fishing Industries have fleet directorates in their administrative set-up. The fishing fleet is mainly concentrated in the northern part off the Caspian Sea. At the end of the fishing season the whole fleet is based in Astrakhan at piers Two or Three and the Volga-Caspian trust's ship repair base at Elling. The trust has no trawlers at its disposal. Wooden, self-propelled fishing ships, seiners and kavasaki (a type of fishing vessel) are equipped with motors of from 35 to 100 hp. The trust can use only two motorships of the ice-breaker-type as combat units: M/S "Silach" and M/S "Moguchii." These ships have steel hulls and superstructure and have 600 hp motors. They have no special installation for mounting artillery or machine guns.

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